



It was a spooky morning for a Boise family who woke up to find a bat in their home! It turns out this bat had rabies, and now the family has to endure a regimen of shots.

It may have a cute little face, but this guy's got bite. Just ask Jessica Hixson. Last Friday, a bat woke her up at 4 a.m.

"Rabies," said Hixson. "That's the first thing that went through my mind."

And that's a terrifying prospect for anyone.

"I was freaked out. I was scared immediately of the bat and kind of hovered under the covers while my husband caught it," said Hixson.

It turns out her fears were well-founded. The bat tested positive for rabies, and that means shots for everyone, even their baby.

"There's no treatment for rabies," said Deputy State Epidemiologist, Dr. Leslie Tengelsen. "You don't want to wait and see if you have symptoms."

Tengelsen says most bats are harmless. In fact, only about one in 200 has rabies. But bats are the only animals in the state that carry rabies.

"It's very important to realize that if you encounter a bat, to assume that it's rabid," said Tengelsen.

Only a few people have the training and the immunity to handle bats. So they may look cute, but they're not worth the trouble.

"We feel that the chances we were exposed from this rabid bat are probably pretty slight, but the consequence is death. So it was worth it for us; the treatment," said Hixson.

So far, eight rabid bats have been found across Idaho this year. 26 were found in 2006.

Health and Welfare says bats enter homes through small openings in a house or open windows. Pets also are known to bring a sick or dead bat home.